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One more day left before the Carnival climax reaches Oranjestad's streets

By MARI BARENO
ARUBA TODAY

It's the Final Countdown. Today the Grand Parade will be held in the heart of San Nicolas, tomorrow in the streets of the capital city Oranjestad and by Tuesday night the whole season will be ended with the burning of King Momo. Then it will be all over and many Arubans will start preparing again for next year's Carnival.

Carnival is being held in many parts of the world in different ways. In Aruba it's the 40th Carnival has been celebrated. Aruba's Carnival grew through the years as the third best in the world, right after the famous celebration of Brazil and Trinidad.

People on the island believe that the Aruba Tivoli Club were the ones that first started with Aruba's Carnival, but that is not the case, according to Bibi Arends, member of the Tivoli Club and active in the Carnival Committee of the club.

"Carnival was already celebrated by many on the island, including some social clubs and immigrants from the

English islands, like Trinidad and Tobago, who lived in Village, San Nicolas, and wanted to keep their traditions alive. Aruba Tivoli started celebrating Carnival in 1944, during World War II," Arends said.

"What Aruba Tivoli Club did back in the year 1954 was, to send a letter to the clubs asking if they wanted to form a committee for the Carnival. The "Centrale Carnaval Comité Aruba" (CCCA) was founded," Arends explained.

His version was confirmed by Milo Croes, president of the S.A.C., the Aruba Carnival Foundation. Croes is a man who's been part of the Aruba Carnival for many years and is the back bone of the celebration. "Before 1955, when the first official Carnival took place on the island, all that we had was a parade, a sort of Jump Up with no music like we have nowadays," Croes recalls.

Croes has been active in the Carnival organization since the start. "I was already active in CCCA, since the founding, but became even more involved when in 1964, I was elected president of CCCA," Croes stated.

In the same year the CCCA became "Stichting Arubaanse Carnival" (SAC). Today Milo Croes, is still the president of S.A.C.

"On Jan. 7, I celebrated 30 years being the president. This is my 31st Carnival," Croes says proudly.

During the years, Croes was often criticized for his strong way of dealing with situations during Carnival and for the firm way he manages S.A.C. But how does he cope with this?

"I don't pay much attention to negative criticism. I just don't listen to those remarks. If someone is willing to give constructive criticism, I'm willing to listen," the president of S.A.C. expressed.

Thinking back about the time Carnival started and comparing it with today he said: "The Carnival, the feeling of the people is the same. What's changed is the way the

participants prepare themselves to be part of the various Carnival events. Everything is more luxurious, much more creative. The participants do their up most to surpass the presentations of the years before. Just take an example of the several queen elections and the shows in which the candidates perform during the election. They use their creativity and this is shown in all the details of the presentations, also the parade," Croes thinks.

As far as the future of Carnival is concerned, 72-year old Croes believes that Aruba will always have one of the best Carnivals in the world and he will continue being part of it. "I will be working for Carnival, for as long as my health permits me to do this. The future of Aruba's Carnival is brilliant," Croes concludes. □



Carnaval

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Milo Croes, president of the Aruba Carnival Foundation, S.A.C., pondering during one of the very few moments he takes time to take pause at the Carnival activities held on the island of Aruba.